Aprill.

YE dayntye Nymphs, that in this blessed Broake
doe bathe your brest,
For sake your watry bowres, and hether looke,
at my request:
And eke you Virgins, that on *Parnasse* dwell,
Whence floweth *Helicon* the learned well,
Helpe me to blaze
Her worthy praise,
Which in her sexe doth all excell.

Of fayre *Elisa* be your silver song,
that blessed wight:
The flowre of Virgins, may shee flourish long,
In princely plight.
For shee is *Syrinx* daughter without spotte,
Which *Pan* the shepheards God of her begot:
So sprong her grace
Of heavenly race,
No mortall blemishe may her blotte.

See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,
(O seemely sight)
Yclad in Scarlot like a mayden Queene,
And Ermines white.
Upon her head a Cremosin coronet,
With Damaske roses and Daffadillies set:
Bayleaves betweene,
And Primroses greene
Embellish the sweete Violet.

Tell me, have ye seene her angelick face,
Like *Phœbe* fayre?
Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace
can you well compare?
The Redde rose medled with the White yfere,
In either cheeke depeincten lively chere.
Her modest eye,
Her Maiestie,
Where have you seene the like, but there?

I sawe *Phœbus* thrust out his go
vpon her to gaze:
But when he sawe, how broade h
it did him amaze.
He blusht to see another Sunne
He durst againe his fyrye face o
Let him, if he dare,
His brightnesse compa
With hers, to have the overthro

Shewe thy selfe *Cynthia* with th
and be not abasht:
When shee the beames of her be
O how art thou dasht?
But I will not match her with
Such follie great sorow to *Niob*
Now she is a stone,
And makes dayly mon
Warning all other to take heede

Pan may be proud, that ever he
such a Bellibone,
And *Syrinx* reioyse, that ever wa
to beare such an one.
Soone as my younglings cryer
To her will I offer a milkwhite
Shee is my goddesse p
And I her shepherds
Albee forswonck and forswatt I

I see *Calliope* speede her to the
where my Goddesse sh
And after her the other Muses
with their Violines.
Bene they not Bay braunches,
All for *Elisa* in her hand to weav
So sweetely they play
And sing all the way,
That it a heaven is to heare.

EDMUND SPENSER *The Shepheardes Calender* LONDON, 1579 THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY